

after another, these Iraqi military personnel are on the point. They are leading the fight, along with 160,000 American military personnel.

And the Iraqi people themselves are becoming more involved in advancing their own security and stability. Here is an interesting fact, Mr. Speaker, that I just learned today: in March of this year, there were essentially 400 tips by Iraqis of insurgent activities, tips made to U.S. and coalition forces. In the month of November, we logged more than 4,700 tips from regular and ordinary Iraqis. The people of Iraq are partnering in their own security and in their own freedom, and that 10-fold increase of that partnership speaks for itself.

On the economic front, we have seen 30,000 new businesses. And GNP per capita in the last year has more than doubled in Iraq for ordinary Iraqis. It is an extraordinary record of success.

Politically, we have around the corner parliamentary elections; and as we speak, Mr. Speaker, there are 327 political entities, or as we might call them, parties or organizations, and 7,000 candidates that will be answering the call of millions of Iraqis who will put themselves, as 8.5 million Iraqis did in January of this year, in harm's way to exercise their own freedom.

It is my fondest hope, Mr. Speaker, that when the President of the United States comes into this well on January 31 of 2006 that maybe in this Chamber, in a seat in this Chamber, might be a legislative leader, or two, of the newly elected Iraqi Parliament.

I have been to Operation Iraqi Freedom three times. I have sat even today with our military commanders and the President of the United States. As we go into this weekend, let the word go forth from here: we are winning the war and winning the peace in Iraq.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. WYNN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WYNN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GOHMERT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GUTKNECHT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FILNER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FRANKS of Arizona addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP: TAX CUTS AND THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be on the House floor here tonight with my good friend from Florida (Mr. MEEK) to continue our discussion that we have been having with the American people and with Members of Congress from all over the country the past few months and even few years.

Today, Mr. Speaker, the Republican-led Congress has once again taken a step in a direction that I think moved it and this Congress away from mainstream America.

Today, the majority has passed another wealthy-focused tax cut in which \$60 billion, up to \$80 billion, over the next 10 years will be spent subsidizing the wealth of the people in this country who make millions and billions of dollars, an average tax break of \$32,000 to wealthy millionaires who have already received more than \$103,000 in tax cuts. More than half the taxpayers making less than \$100,000 a year will receive less than \$30 back from this tax cut. This is a tax cut that has clearly been focused on the wealthy Americans.

And coincidentally enough, a couple of weeks ago, our friends, our good friends on the Republican side, have said that they passed a budget deficit reduction package which made cuts of \$50 billion; and then they passed a tax cut which took away \$80 billion, which is a negative \$30 billion deficit in the hole. Only in Washington is that deficit reduction.

And before we get going here, I want to just share and read into the RECORD, if my friend does not mind, a letter that was sent, and I know I received one of these and a statement on behalf of several religious organizations. Bishop Frank Griswold of the Episcopal, Anglican, Church USA, together with leaders of four other mainline denominations, has called on the United States Congress to defeat the 2006 Federal budget once and for all because it betrays the poor.

And I just want to say to Bishop Griswold and the Anglican Church in the United States of America and the other denominations that are there,

Dr. Kirkpatrick of the Presbyterian Church; Reverend Thomas, general minister and president of the United Church of Christ; Mr. James Winkler, general secretary, Board of Church and Society for the United Methodist Church, thank you for speaking out against this.

Because in this day and age, morality and values have been such a strong topic of conversation in the United States, I want to commend these folks for stepping out front and saying that this budget and tax cuts for the rich while we are cutting food stamps; free and reduced lunch; child support enforcement payments; money for college, Pell grants; cutting those programs and then giving tax cuts to the wealthiest people in the country is something that goes in direct contradiction to what they are trying to teach.

And if I could just take a minute or two to read some of these comments into the RECORD, if my friend does not mind:

The church leaders declare: "At each stage of the complicated legislative process, we have viewed the budget through the lens of faith and our values and found it wanting. Now we ask that it be defeated once and for all."

"Despite the exposure of poverty in the U.S. revealed in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the statement says, 'Congress continues to make decisions which benefit the rich but are paid for by the poor and most vulnerable in our land.'

"The leaders criticized the budget's potential compromises which would cut funding for food stamps, heating subsidies, Medicaid, and child support enforcement.

"They will seek to find compromise where there should be no compromise, that is, with the lives and future of the poor of this country."

"They asked that Congress reflect during the season of Advent, reject the budget and join with the President to craft a budget that will reflect 'our Nation's historic concern for justice and the least among us.'"

This is not TIM RYAN. This is not KENDRICK MEEK. This is not the 30-something Working Group. This is a group of bishops and church leaders all over the country who have stepped out front and stated that cutting taxes for the wealthiest people in our country and doing it on the backs of the poorest among us is not consistent with the values that they teach in their churches every week.

Here is Cal Thomas. Cal Thomas is one of the most conservative columnists. I do not even know if he is a Republican, but he is a conservative columnist with the Washington Times. When we are finding all this money to balance our budget, Cal Thomas says: "Here's a suggestion: Don't start with the poor. Start with the rich."

We passed an energy bill several months ago out of this Chamber that had \$16 billion in subsidies for the energy companies and the oil companies,